

Zen & the Art of the Visitor Census



Agenda

1. What is a visitor census?
2. Developing a methodology
3. Making it happen
4. Forecasting activity
5. Questions and Discussion



What is a visitor census?

A count and survey of visitors!


- Number of visitors
- Visitor demographics
- Visitor preferences

Developing a Methodology

Develop methodology *at least* two months before census

- Where to conduct census?
- When to conduct the census?
- Who is going to conduct the census?
- What do you want to know about visitors?

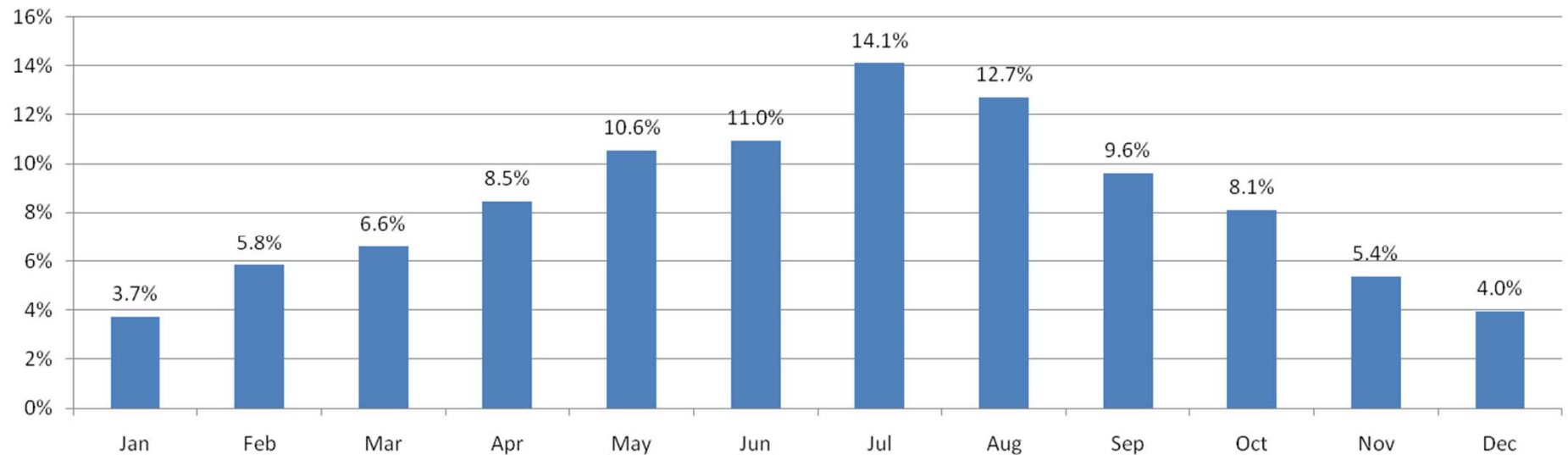
Developing a Methodology: Where to conduct your census?

- 
- Most representative sites
 - Suitable for survey

- Is it feasible to staff every entrance?
- Do you want to know about internal trail activity?
- Do your selected sites reflect your system?

Developing a Methodology: When to conduct your census?

- Ideally 4 times over a year
 - January
 - May
 - July
 - September
- Peak time of year
 - July



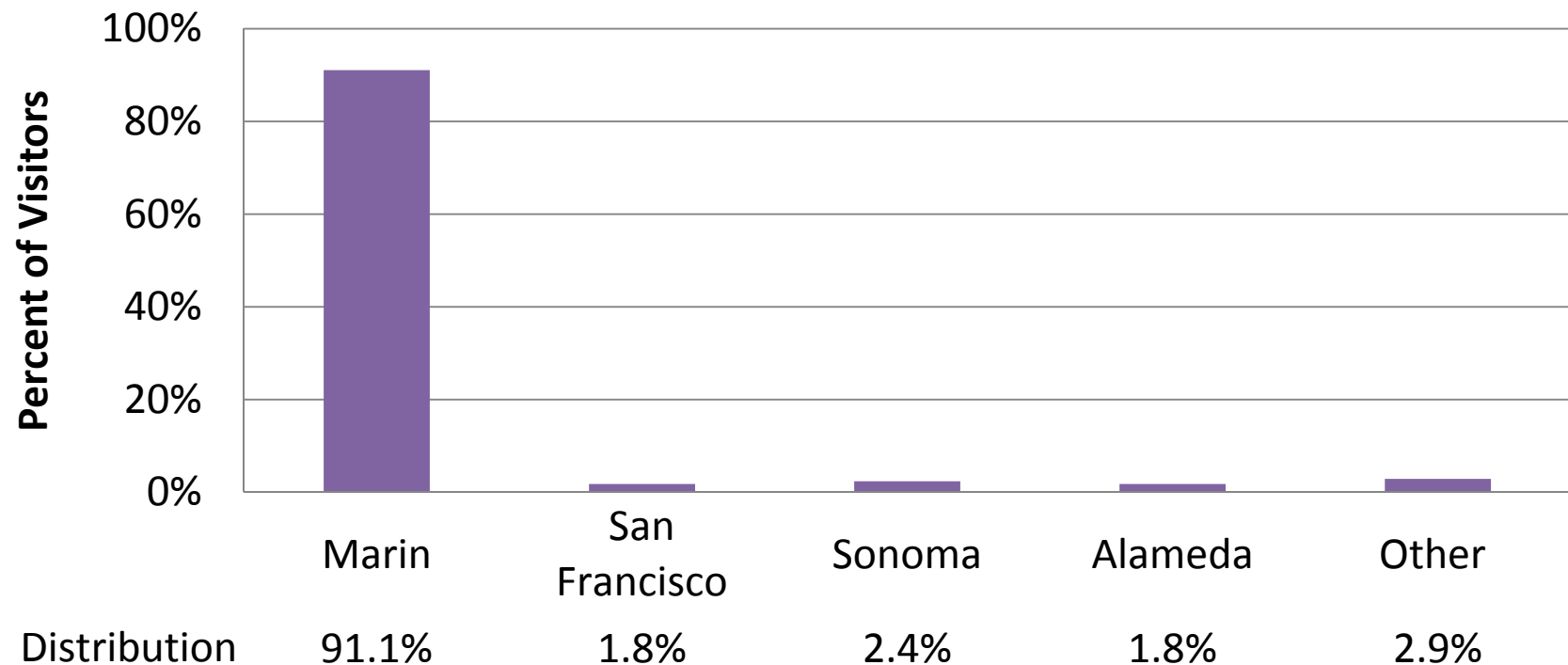
Developing a Methodology:

Who will conduct your census?

- Volunteers?
 - Do you have a large dedicated volunteer base?
 - Use caution when recruiting students!
- Staff?
 - Do you have budget to use staff?
- Consultants?
 - Planning firms
 - Traffic count firms

Developing a Methodology: What do you want to know about visitors?

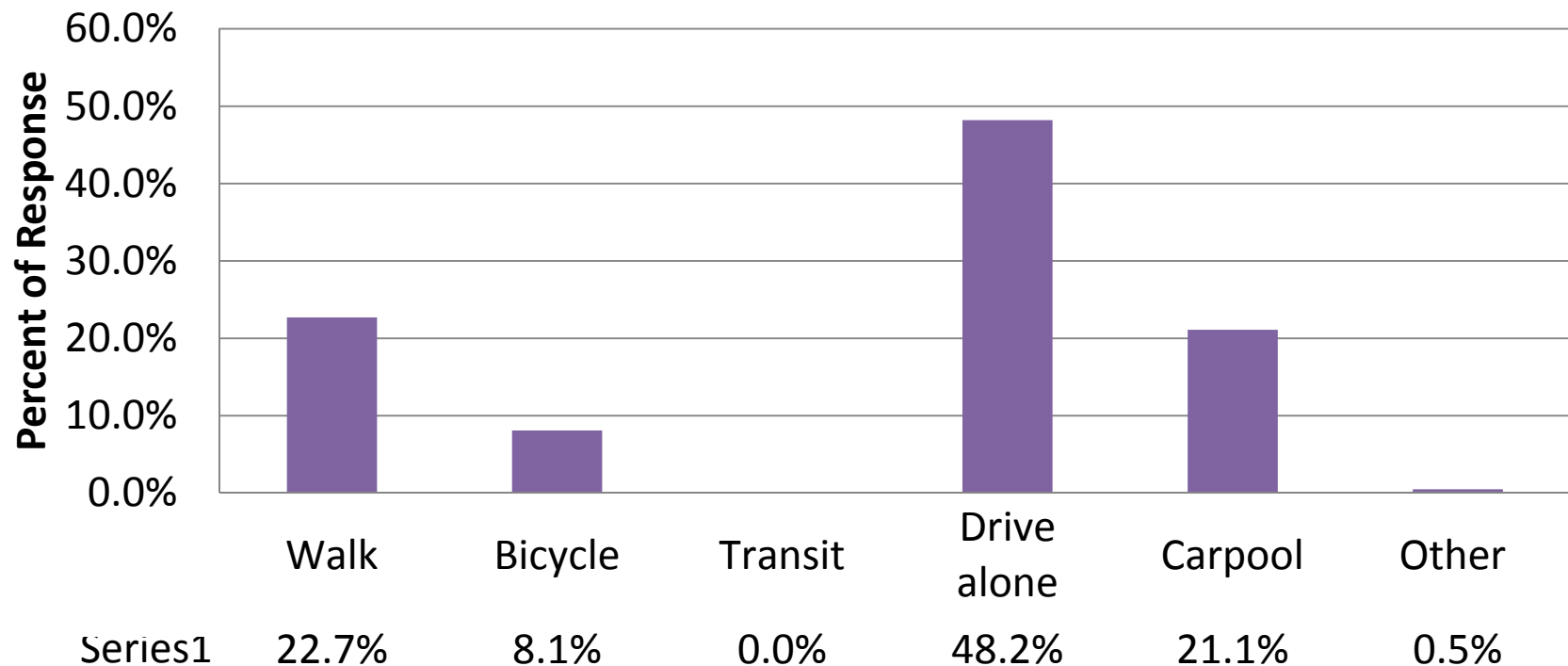
- Demographics
 - Gender/age/ethnicity
 - Where do they live? Are they within your jurisdiction?



Developing a Methodology:

What do you want to know about visitors?

- How did they arrive?
 - Car, carpool, bike, walk, transit?
 - Can you also conduct a parking inventory?

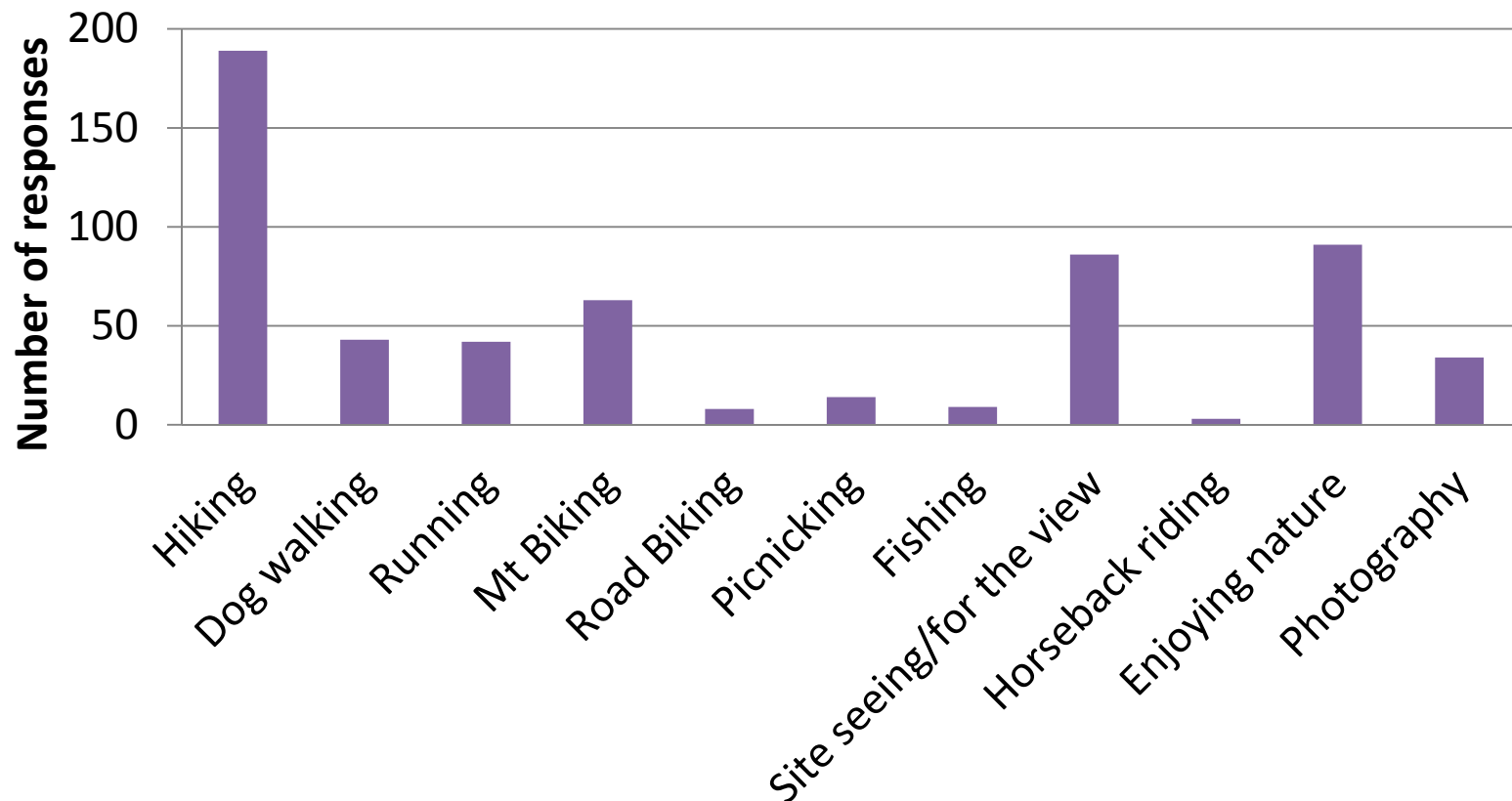


Developing a Methodology:

What do you want to know about visitors?

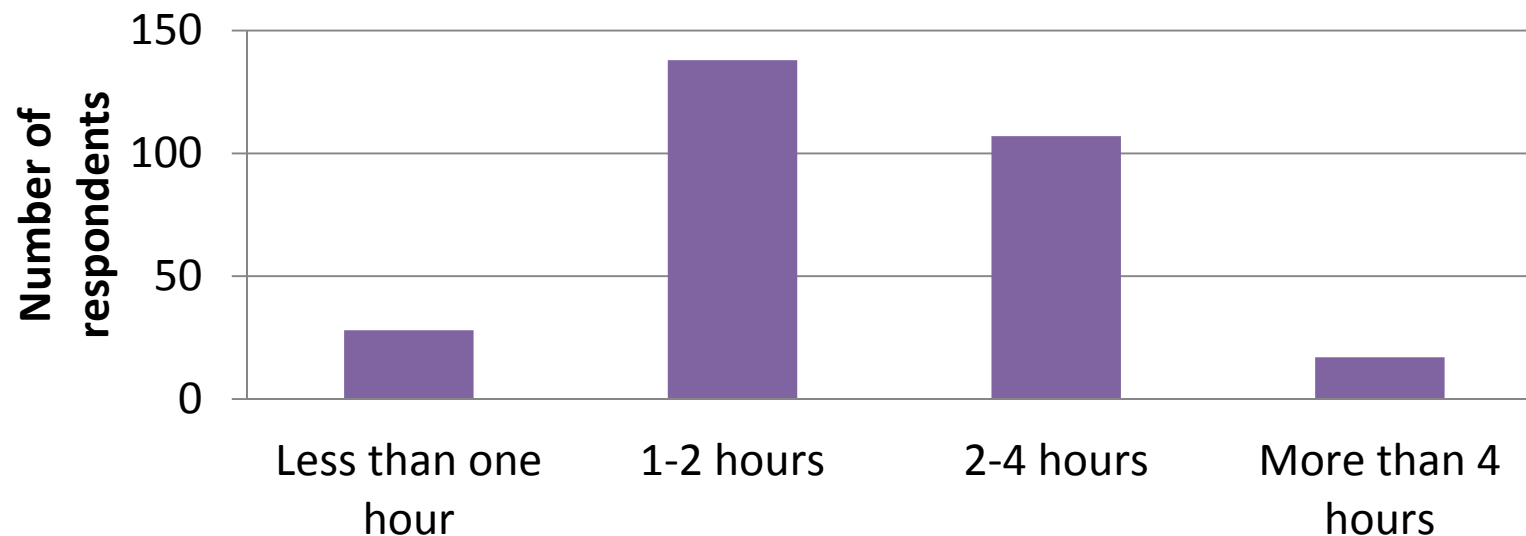
What is the primary purpose of the visit?

Walk, jog, dog walking, picnic, fishing, horseback riding, enjoy nature, photography, etc.



Developing a Methodology: What do you want to know about visitors?

Length of this visit



Developing a Methodology:

What do you want to know about visitors?

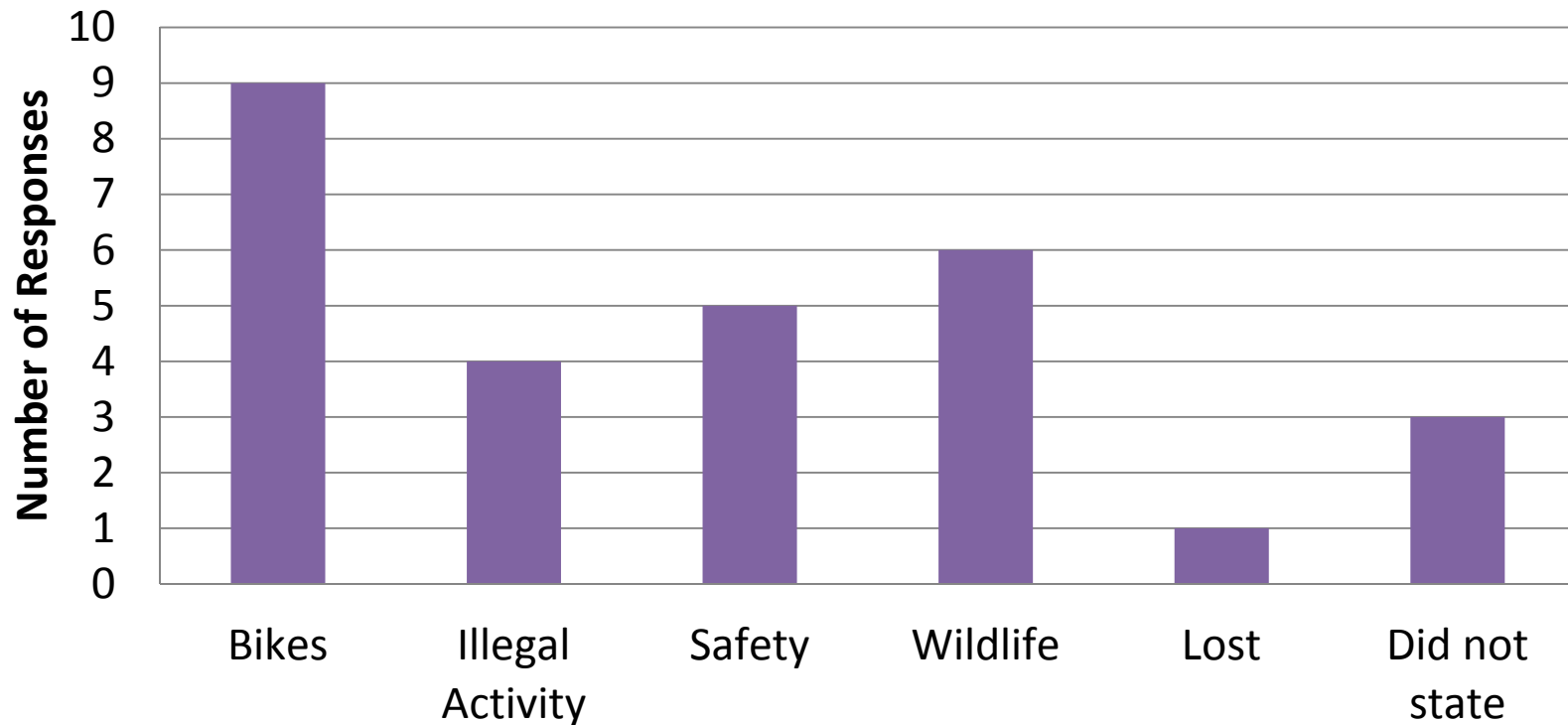
How often do they visit?

Answer	Answer Detail	Count	%
First time visitor		22	7.4%
Less than once a month	(Less than once a month, a couple times a year)	31	10.4%
A few times a month	(1-3 times a month)	79	26.5%
A dozen times a month	(2-3 times a week)	110	36.9%
Almost every day of the month	(6 days a week)	48	16.1%
Other		19	6.4%
No Answer		10	3.4%
Total		319	

Developing a Methodology:

What do you want to know about visitors?

- Safety – work with Rangers to develop questions
 - Feel safe? Or How often do they see rangers or staff?
 - If there are safety concerns, what are they?



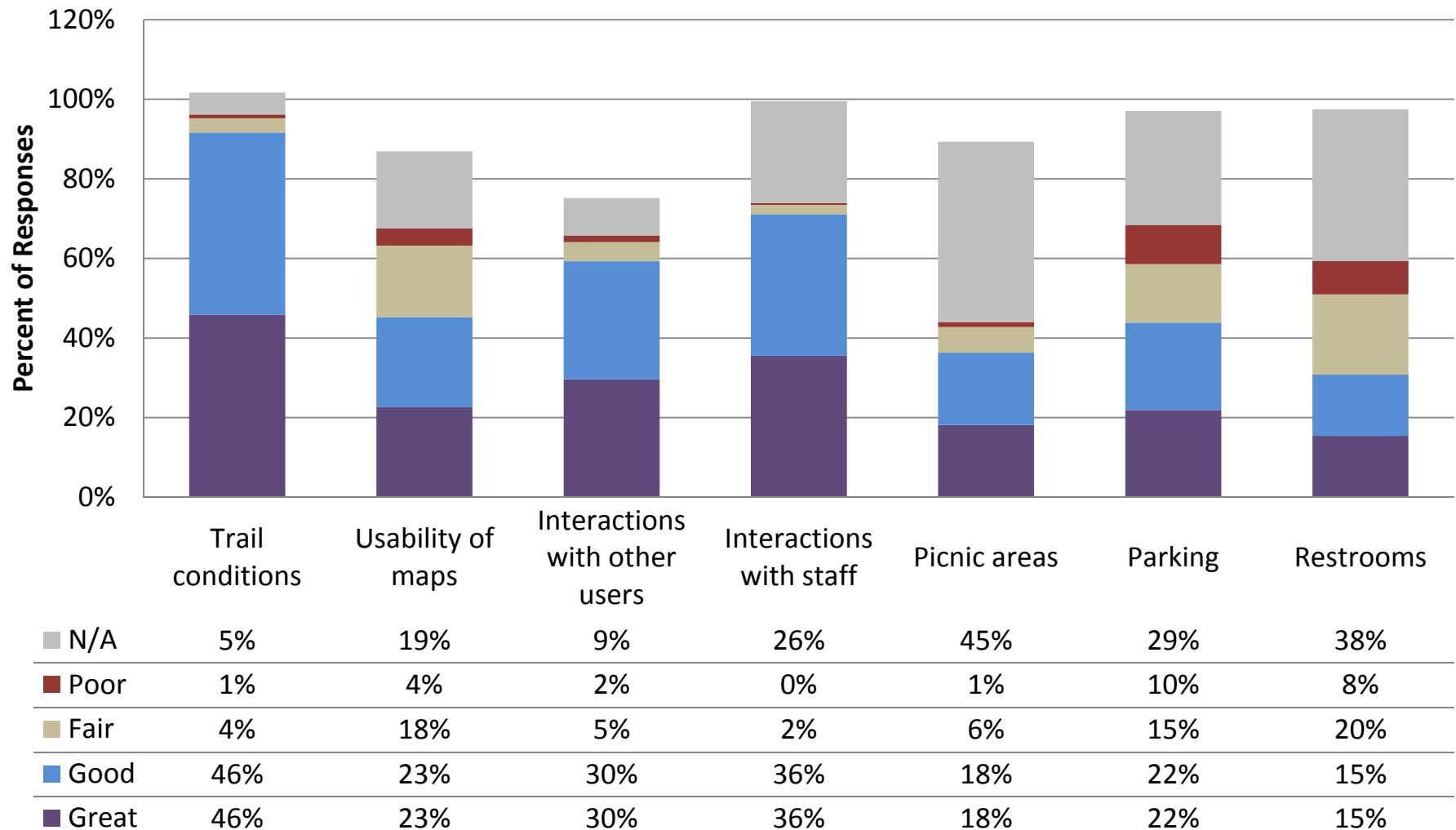
Visitor Concerns

Provide an opened ended response question and visitors will tell you about concerns.

Common concerns include:

- Dog/horse waste
- Concern about off-leash dogs
- Requests for designated off-leash dog areas
- Requests for wayfinding

Overall Visit Experience



Making it happen

- 2 months before census
 - 8 week countdown: Finalize methodology
 - 6 week countdown: Recruit volunteers/find staff/contract with firm
- 1 month before census
 - 4 week countdown:
 - Print surveys/post survey online
 - Print count forms and accompanying maps
 - Print instructions
 - 2 week countdown
 - Train volunteers/staff
 - Distribute materials at training



Forecasting Activity

www.bikepeddocumentation.org

Microsoft Excel - Long Winter Short Summer					
<div> <div>Home</div> <div>Insert</div> <div>Page Layout</div> <div>Formulas</div> <div>Data</div> <div>Review</div> <div>View</div> <div>Developer</div> <div>Acrobat</div> </div>					
<div> <div>Normal</div> <div>Page Layout</div> <div>Page Break Preview</div> <div>Custom Views</div> <div>Full Screen</div> <div>Workbook Views</div> <div>Ruler</div> <div>Gridlines</div> <div>Message Bar</div> <div>Formula Bar</div> <div>Headings</div> <div>Show/Hide</div> <div>Zoom</div> <div>100%</div> <div>Zoom to Selection</div> <div>New Window</div> <div>Arrange All</div> <div>Freeze Panes</div> <div>Split</div> <div>Hide</div> <div>Unhide</div> </div>					
D25 fx Long Winter Short Summer					
	A	B	C	D	E
1					
18					
19			Inputs - Green cells require your attention.		
20					
21			Input your two-hour count total	20	
22			Count date	9/21/2010	
23			Count time: Enter first hour of two hour count period	10:00 AM	
24			Type: Path or PED District	Path	
25			Climate Zone: Long Winter Short Summer, Moderate Climate, or Very Hot Summer Mild Winter	Long Winter Short Summer	
26					
27		Multiplier Value	Outputs - Orange cells are the daily, weekly, monthly and annual estimates.		
28					
29		1.05	1 hour period multiplied by 1.05	21.00	

Instructions Worksheet (2 hour)

Ready

Forecasting Activity

- 34 open space preserves and parks

Period	Estimated Activity (Range)	
Weekly Activity	38,100	70,100
Monthly Activity (September)	169,000	301,000
Annual Activity	2,820,000	3,760,000

Making it a Zen Experience

- Plan ahead – *at least* 2 months before
- Counts – Be realistic about using volunteers
 - If you don't have a large *active* volunteer base, use staff or hire a firm
- Surveys - Work with staff & rangers to brainstorm questions

Questions?



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